

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8586
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
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USMISSION USBERLIN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BONN 09005

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG, NATO, EEC
SUBJECT: NATO MINISTERIAL: SENIOR LEVEL MEETING ON
BERLIN AND GERMANY -- ASSESSMENT

REF: BONN 8674

SUMMARY: AT A MEETING MAY 16, THE BONN GROUP REACHED
AD REF AGREEMENT ON THE FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF THE
BERLIN SITUATION SINCE THE LAST NATO MINISTERIAL.
ACTION REQUESTED: APPROVAL OF ASSESSMENT. END SUMMARY

1. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF THE BERLIN ASSESSMENT WHICH
WAS AGREED AD REF BY THE BONN GROUP ON MAY 16.

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BEGIN TEXT

I. GENERAL TRENDS

(1) THE SITUATION IN BERLIN OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS
HAS REMAINED RELATIVELY CALM AND WITHOUT MAJOR

DISTURBANCES. TENSION WITH THE SOVIET UNION OVER BERLIN, THOUGH NEVER ENTIRELY ABSENT, IS PROBABLY AT AS LOW A POINT AS IT HAS BEEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS. IT HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED BY THE SOVIETS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS, MOST SIGNIFICANTLY BY BREZHNEV TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, THAT THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT, ALTHOUGH THEY CONTINUE TO STRESS DISSATISFACTION WITH ITS IMPLEMENTATION. THE MOOD IN THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE RESULTS OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT TO BONN IS ONE OF OPTIMISM WITHOUT ILLUSIONS. IT HOPES THAT THE VISIT MAY HAVE HAD A SALUTARY EFFECT ON THE SOVIET ATTITUDE.

(2) IN THE KEY AREAS OF CIVILIAN ACCESS TO BERLIN AND THE TIES BETWEEN BERLIN AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO BE GENERALLY SATISFACTORY, ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS AND THE GDR CONTINUE THEIR PRESSURE ON TIES AND ON THE REPRESENTATION BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY OF BERLIN'S INTERESTS ABROAD.

(3) BERLIN'S ECONOMIC SITUATION, WITH A RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH IS 1 PERCENT HIGHER THAN IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND A SLOWER RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, HAS REMAINED LARGELY UNCHANGED OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS. HOWEVER, NEW ECONOMIC AID
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MEASURES DEVELOPED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE BERLIN SENAT ARE EXPECTED TO INCREASE FEDERAL ECONOMIC AID SUBSTANTIALLY. BOTH PRESIDENT SCHEEL'S BERLIN COMMISSION AND THE GOVERNING MAYOR HAVE MADE GREAT EFFORTS TO ASSIST BERLIN'S VIABILITY. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOOD IN BERLIN HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS.

(4) LOOKING AHEAD TO THE END OF THE YEAR, QUESTIONS ARISING FROM BERLIN'S INCLUSION IN THE AREA OF APPLICATION OF THE TREATIES SETTING UP THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THE ASSUMPTION BY THE GOVERNING MAYOR OF THE BUNDESRAAT PRESIDENCY MAY CAUSE INCREASED DIFFERENCES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE USSR AND THE GDR WILL BE RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT WHAT THE ALLIES AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY CONSIDER TO BE NORMAL AND PERMISSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS. THERE IS, HOWEVER, UNLIKELY TO BE A MAJOR CRISIS.

II. SOVIET AND GDR POLICIES OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS

(5) 1978 BEGAN WITH HEIGHTENED ALLIED AND FEDERAL GERMAN

CONCERN IN TWO AREAS OF PARTICULAR SENSITIVITY:
CIVILIAN AUTOBAHN ACCESS TO WEST BERLIN AND ALLIED ACCESS
TO EAST BERLIN.

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(6) THE NUMBER OF CASES OF GDR INTERFERENCE WITH TRANSIT
TRAVEL HAD RISEN SHARPLY DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS.
ALTHOUGH THE NUMBER OF CASES WAS SMALL IN RELATION TO THE
NUMBER OF TRANSIT JOURNEYS MADE WITHOUT INCIDENT (ONE IN
5,000), THE FACT THAT THE GDR CLAIMED GREATER RIGHTS
THAN IT HAS UNDER THE BILATERAL TRANSIT AGREEMENT AND THE
GDR'S USE OF THIS METHOD TO BRING PRESSURE ON THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO CURB EXFILTRATION VIA THE TRANSIT
ROUTES CAUSED CONCERN. THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY,
IN AN EFFORT TO DEFUSE THE PROBLEM, MADE A HIGH-LEVEL
DECISION TO ENFORCE EXISTING LEGISLATION MORE
STRINGENTLY (E.G. AGAINST FALSIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS,
TAMPERING WITH SEALED VEHICLES, ETC.). AT THE SAME

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TIME THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT RAISED THE ISSUE AT A HIGH LEVEL WITH THE GDR. THEREAFTER THE INTERFERENCE CEASED ALMOST OVERNIGHT AND THE SITUATION HAS RETURNED TO NORMAL.

(7) WITH RESPECT TO ALLIED ACCESS TO THE EASTERN SECTOR, RUMORS WERE CURRENT AT THE END OF THE YEAR THAT THE GDR WOULD TAKE MEASURES ON JANUARY 1 THAT WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF IMPOSING CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON THAT ACCESS. AS THINGS TURNED OUT, NO RESTRICTIONS WERE IMPOSED. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THE RUMORS WERE UNFOUNDED, OR, AS APPEARS MORE LIKELY, WHETHER THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES EXERCISED A RESTRAINING INFLUENCE.

(8) SINCE SOVIET PROTESTS SERVE AS A BAROMETER OF THE LEVEL OF TENSION, IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT MADE THEIR PROTESTS TO THE THREE ALLIES IN CAPITALS OR IN MOSCOW SINCE OCTOBER 1977. PROTESTS IN BERLIN HAVE CONTINUED AT THEIR USUAL PACE, AS THEY HAVE IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND ORGANIZATIONS. HOWEVER, THE PROTESTS HAVE SOMETIMES SEEMED TO BE FOR THE FORM AND IN NO CASE HAS THE SOVIET UNION BEEN ABLE TO PREVENT THE CONTINUED REPRESENTATION ABROAD OF THE INTERESTS OF BERLIN BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY.

(9) FINALLY, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, THE BREZHNEV VISIT CAN BE CONSIDERED AN OPPORTUNITY TO NARROW THE GAP BETWEEN ON THE ONE HAND THE SOVIET, AND ON THE OTHER THE ALLIED AND FEDERAL GERMAN ATTITUDES REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QA. ALTHOUGH, AS EXPECTED, NO BREAKTHROUGHS WERE ACHIEVED, BREZHNEV EMPHASIZED THAT THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT WISH TO CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR BERLIN, AND THE SOVIET UNION AGREED, FOR THE

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FIRST TIME SINCE 1973, TO REPEAT IN FULL THE "PETERS-BERG FORMULA," I.E. "BOTH SIDES CONFIRMED THE VIEW THAT STRICT OBSERVANCE AND FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT OF 3 SEPTEMBER, 1971, CONTINUE TO BE AN ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE FOR LASTING DETENTE IN CENTRAL EUROPE AND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATES CONCERNED, NOTABLY BETWEEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE SOVIET UNION."

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10. DESPITE THE FOREGOING INDICATIONS THAT THE
SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR ARE PREPARED TO REDUCE TENSIONS
OVER BERLIN, HOWEVER, THE FACT REMAINS THAT THEY HAVE
CONTINUED THEIR EFFORTS TO LOOSEN THE TIES BETWEEN THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE WESTERN SECTORS OF
BERLIN AS WELL AS TO ENHANCE SOVIET (AND GDR) INFLUENCE
OVER EVENTS CONCERNING THOSE SECTORS. THE SOVIET UNION
AND ITS WARSAW PACT ALLIES CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO
DEVELOP DIRECT "TIES" WITH THE WESTERN SECTORS OF
BERLIN AS IF THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN WERE A
"SEPARATE POLITICAL ENTITY" AND LARGELY TO PREVENT THE
INCLUSION OF BERLIN AND BERLINERS IN THEIR BILATERAL
RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. THE
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USSR AND THE GDR HAVE PROTESTED A NUMBER OF FEDERAL GERMAN AND EC ACTIVITIES IN AND CONCERNING BERLIN, AND THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS CEMA PARTNERS CONTINUE TO RESIST THE INCLUSION OF BERLIN IN PROPOSED EAST EUROPEAN TREATIES WITH THE EC. THE GDR, WITH SOVIET SUPPORT, HAS SOUGHT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO ASSERT A COMPETENCE IT DOES NOT HAVE WITH RESPECT TO THE QA AND WEST BERLIN, AND TO INTERJECT ITSELF IN FOUR-POWER MATTERS BY RAISING SUCH MATTERS WITH THE ALLIES AND THE SENAT. THE PUBLICATION OF THE SOVIET/GDR DOCUMENTATION ON THE QA, WHICH IMPLICITLY PORTRAYS THE GDR AS AN EQUAL PARTNER OF THE USSR IN ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH AND THE SUCCESS OF THAT AGREEMENT, MUST ALSO BE SEEN IN THIS CONTEXT.

(11) ALSO OF CONCERN IS THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS CONTINUED THE THEME THAT ONLY WEST BERLIN HAS A FOUR-POWER STATUS AND HAS ATTEMPTED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT HAS A RIGHT OF CODETERMINATION REGARDING WHAT IS PERMITTED TO GO ON IN THE WESTERN SECTORS. IN APPARENT SUPPORT OF THIS THESIS, SOVIET FLAG PATROLS IN THE WESTERN SECTORS HAVE BECOME MORE OBVIOUS AND ON OCCASION OBTRUSIVE. THEIR CONDUCT IN REMOVING POLITICAL POSTERS THEY CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE AND IN INTERFERING WITH PRESIDENT SCHEEL'S MOTORCADE HAS NECESSITATED ALLIED PROTESTS. IN ADDITION, THE SOVIET CONSULATE GENERAL HAS ON A FEW OCCASIONS TRIED TO TAKE UP POLITICAL MATTERS, PARTICULARLY WITH THE SENAT, CONTRARY TO AGREED MINUTE II OF THE QA.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE THREE POWERS AND THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

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(12) WHILE THERE IS ROOM FOR GUARDED OPTIMISM BASED ON THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SIX MONTHS, THERE IS NO REASON TO EXPECT ANY BASIC CHANGE IN SOVIET POLICY AND THE EVIDENCE IS INSUFFICIENT TO GIVE PROMISE OF A LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENT IN THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WESTERN SECTORS. THE SOVIET ATTITUDE IN RECENT MONTHS MAY BE THE RESULT OF A CONSCIOUS POLICY DECISION BASED ON OTHER CONSIDERATIONS BUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CAREFUL EFFORTS TO REMOVE UNNECESSARY CAUSES OF FRICTION HAVE ALSO DEPRIVED THE SOVIETS OF SOME OF THE EXCUSES THEY MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE HAD. THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS BERLIN MATTERS IN THE MONTHS TO COME WILL SHOW

WHETHER THE OPTIMISM OF THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT
AFTER THE BREZHNEV VISIT IS JUSTIFIED IN THE LONG TERM.

(13). THE SOVIET UNION REGARDS BERLIN AS A CONVENIENT
LEVER WHICH IT CAN TRY TO USE TO INFLUENCE BOTH GERMAN
STATES. THE GDR CANNOT HELP BUT SMART
UNDER THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED ON FULL GDR SOVEREIGNTY
BY THE BERLIN SITUATION AND THE IMPACT WHICH WEST BERLIN
HAS ON THE EAST GERMAN POPULATION. IF THE SOVIET
POLICY TOWARDS BERLIN IS MORE RESTRAINED AT THE MOMENT
THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE RECENT PAST, IT IS LIKELY THAT
THIS IS DETERMINED BY FACTORS, WHICH ARE IN THEMSELVES
TRANSIENT, SUCH AS THE BREZHNEV VISIT OR THE FACT THAT
THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS APPROACHING A PERIOD OF TRANSI-
TION.

(14) IT THUS SEEMS CERTAIN THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL
CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO WEAKEN THE TIES BETWEEN THE
WESTERN SECTORS AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, WITH
THE GOAL THAT THE CITY WILL IN FACT BE CONVERTED INTO
THE "INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ENTITY" THE SOVIETS AND GDR
ALREADY CLAIM IT IS. TO THAT END, THE
SOVIETS WILL PRESUMABLY CONTINUE THE PAPER WAR OF PRO-
TESTS, IN AN EFFORT TO BUILD A WELL-DOCUMENTED LEGAL
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CASE WHICH WILL CONVINCE WORLD OPINION WHILE WEAKENING

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ALLIED RESOLVE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS WILL
CONTINUE TO BE HYPERSENSITIVE TO WHAT THEY DESCRIBE
AS ATTEMPTS BY THE ALLIES AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANY TO CHANGE, TO EASTERN DISADVANTAGE, THE STATUS
OF BERLIN. PRE-EMINENT AMONG THESE ARE BERLIN'S PLACE
IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE NORMAL MAINTENANCE
AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL TIES BETWEEN THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND BERLIN.

(15) IN THE INTEREST OF THE SECURITY AND VIABILITY OF
THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE
BROADEST POSSIBLE CONSENSUS, EXTENDING ON OCCASION EVEN
TO POINTS OF DETAIL, BE MAINTAINED AMONG THE ALLIES
AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY. COORDINATION AMONG
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THE FOUR DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS HAS BEEN VERY
SATISFACTORY ALTHOUGH IT SOMETIMES TOOK LONGER THAN WAS
DESIRABLE. WHILE THERE MAY SOMETIMES HAVE BEEN DIFFER-
ENCES OF APPROACH, THE COORDINATION HAS ENSURED THAT A
CONSENSUS HAS BEEN REACHED IN ALL CASES WHERE A CONSENSUS
WAS NECESSARY.

IV. QUESTIONS REQUIRING PARTICULAR ATTENTION IN THE
FUTURE

(16) SEVERAL QUESTIONS WILL CONTINUE TO MERIT PARTICU-
LARLY CLOSE ATTENTION DURING THE COMING
MONTHS.

(A) PARTICIPATION OF BERLINERS IN THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY. THE FIRST DIRECT ELECTIONS ARE
SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 1979 AND THESE WILL BECOME A TOPIC

OF EVER-INCREASING PUBLIC ATTENTION, NOT LEAST IN BERLIN. IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE PROBLEMS, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO CONSULT CLOSELY ON THE WAY THE SELECTION OF THE BERLIN MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IS CARRIED OUT BY THE BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED DISTINCTION BETWEEN DIRECTLY ELECTED AND INDIRECTLY CHOSEN MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY IS NOT ERODED OR BLURRED. WHILE THE SOVIET UNION WILL OBJECT TO ANY PARTICIPATION BY BERLINERS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY ARE SELECTED, SOVIET SENSITIVITIES WOULD BE PARTICULARLY EXACERBATED IF AN EXTRAORDINARY DEGREE OF PUBLICITY WERE GIVEN TO BERLINERS' PARTICIPATION OR IF IT APPEARED THAT THE INDIRECT SELECTION PROCESS WAS A MERE SHAM.

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(B) INCLUSION OF BERLIN IN EC AGREEMENTS WITH CEMA COUNTRIES. THE FULL INCLUSION OF BERLIN IN SUCH AGREEMENTS, SUBJECT TO ALLIED RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CONTINUED VIABILITY OF THE CITY. IT HAS SO FAR NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO AGREE ON THE APPLICABILITY CLAUSES BECAUSE OF THE SOVIET UNION'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT THE REALITY OF BERLIN'S INCLUSION IN THE AREA OF APPLICABILITY OF THE TREATIES SETTING UP THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES. GIVEN THE INHERENT IMPORTANCE OF THE AGREEMENTS TO EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT ANY MORE FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY WILL OCCUR TO OBTAIN SOVIET ACCEPTANCE. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT FOR BERLIN THAT THE ALLIES AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DO THEIR UTMOST TO ACHIEVE THIS RESULT. ASSURANCES THAT THE WEST IS NOT SEEKING TO CHANGE THE LEGAL SITUATION OF

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THE WESTERN SECTORS MAY HELP.

(C) THE GOVERNING MAYOR'S ASSUMPTION OF THE
BUNDESRAT PRESIDENCY. THIS AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMEN-
TARY ASSEMBLY QUESTION PRESENT THE TWO MOST DIFFICULT
PROBLEMS WHICH WE FORESEE MAY ARISE DURING THE NEXT
SIX MONTHS. THE GOVERNING MAYOR HAS SAID THAT HE WILL
EXERCISE THE OFFICE WITH RESTRAINT. IT IS THEREFORE
UNLIKELY THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES WILL HAVE FIRM GROUND
ON WHICH TO BASE A COMPLAINT. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE
CERTAIN INDICATIONS THAT THE USSR MAY INTEND NOT TO PLAY
UP ITS COMPLAINTS ABOUT HIS ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE, THE
QUESTION IS A HIGHLY SENSITIVE ONE AND WILL REQUIRE
CONTINUED CLOSE MONITORING AND CAREFUL COORDINATION BY
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THE ALLIES AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO
ENSURE THAT QUESTIONS OF POLITICAL WISDOM ARE FULLY
CONSIDERED.

(D) GDR ATTEMPTS TO ENHANCE ITS ROLE REGARDING
BERLIN. AS NOTED ABOVE, SIGNS OF THIS TREND HAVE
ALREADY APPEARED. THE TREND CAN BE EXPECTED TO
CONTINUE AND THE GDR, BOTH IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
AND IN ITS EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH THE
ALLIES, CAN BE EXPECTED TO ATTEMPT TO ASSERT A COMPE-
TENCE FOR BERLIN MATTERS WHICH IT HAS HITHERTO NOT
ENJOYED. THESE ATTEMPTS MUST BE CONSISTENTLY AND
SYSTEMATICALLY REBUFFED.

(E) THE VIABILITY OF BERLIN. THIS QUESTION WILL
CONTINUE TO BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE; IT IS THEREFORE
ALSO COVERED BY A SEPARATE PAPER FOLLOWING UP THE
VIABILITY STUDY PRESENTED TO MINISTERS IN DECEMBER
1977. THE INCREASED ASSISTANCE PLANNED BY
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE HIGH PRIORITY GIVEN
TO THE QUESTION BY THE SENAT OFFER HOPE OF A MODERATE
IMPROVEMENT IN THIS AREA.
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